

Local Development Plan 2032  
Technical Supplement Paper 15

## Transportation



**Ards and  
North Down**  
Borough Council

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of this document

- 1.1 This technical supplement is one of a number of topic-based documents detailing the evidence base used to inform the preparation of the Ards and North Down Local Development Plan (LDP) draft Plan Strategy 2032. This suite of documents should be read alongside the policies contained within the draft Plan Strategy, in order to understand the rationale and justification for each policy.
- 1.2 In May 2019, the Council launched the Preferred Options Paper (POP), the first of 3 public consultation documents which will be issued through the LDP process. The POP outlined the vision and strategic objectives of the plan based upon the baseline information detailed in a suite of position papers. The technical supplements which complement the draft Plan Strategy will build upon the baseline information gathered in the position papers and show how this has been progressed through the LDP process to formulate the draft Plan Strategy.
- 1.3 This technical supplement builds upon and updates the Transportation Preferred Options Paper position paper, and along with the full suite of technical supplements, topic papers and associated documents sets out the evidence base that has formulated the town centres and retailing policies in the draft Plan Strategy.
- 1.4 Public consultation processes and engagement with elected members have also been taken into account. It should be noted that this is based upon the best information available at the time of compiling this position paper. Amendments may be required as new data becomes available or as a result of any changes in policy or guidance.

### Planning and Transportation

- 1.5 Planning has an important role to play in integrating land use and transportation by promoting sustainable transport choices; promoting accessibility for all; and reducing the need to travel, especially by private car.
- 1.6 The Department for Infrastructure has overall responsibility for public transport in Northern Ireland and for the safety and operating standards of road passenger transport providers and licensing of bus routes. The majority of public transport services in Northern Ireland are provided by subsidiary companies of the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC) such

as Ulsterbus, Metro and Northern Ireland Railways under the umbrella brand name of Translink.

- 1.7 The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) provides an overarching strategic framework for development plans and policies, which guide public and private investment decisions relating to land-use. The RDS recognises that Northern Ireland is heavily dependent on a roads based transport network. The rail network is limited and bus services beyond the Belfast Metropolitan Area are largely inter-urban. This brings an increasing dependence upon the private car which has a detrimental impact on the environment and sustainability.
- 1.8 The RDS advises that housing allocation through the local development plan should be informed by a housing evaluation framework. This framework sets out a number of tests to assist judgement on the allocation of housing growth. These tests include the requirement for studies to be carried out to assess the potential for integrating land use and public transport and walking and cycling routes to help reduce reliance on the car.
- 1.9 The Local Development Plan plays a crucial role in integrating land use and transportation by ensuring that land use allocations, key site requirements and policies of the development plan are closely linked with the policies, proposals and investment priorities for transportation identified in the relevant transport plan.

## 2.0 REGIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

### [Programme for Government 2024-2027](#)

- 2.1 The Northern Ireland Executive has agreed and consulted upon 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most', the Programme for Government (PfG) 2024-2027. The PfG sets out the Executive's priorities for making a difference to people's lives – comprising nine immediate priorities and three long-term missions of people, planet and prosperity, with a cross-cutting commitment to peace. Particularly relevant to transportation is the immediate priority 'reform and transformation of public services.'

### [Draft Programme for Government 2016-2021](#)

- 2.2 The previous draft Programme for Government 2016-2021 was the most up to date expression of the highest level of policy from the Northern Ireland Executive during much of the preparation of the draft Plan Strategy. It set out 14 strategic outcomes which the Executive believed best described the society we wish to have. Of particular relevance to transportation are 'we

have high quality public services’ and ‘we connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure’.

### Regional Development Strategy 2035

- 2.3 The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) provides an overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide the public and private sectors. It is not limited to land use but recognises that policies for physical development have far reaching implications. The RDS addresses economic, social and environmental issues aimed at achieving sustainable development and social cohesion. The Local Development Plan must take account of the RDS.
- 2.4 The vision of the RDS is for “An outward-looking, dynamic and liveable Region with a strong sense of its place in the wider world; a Region of opportunity where people enjoy living and working in a healthy environment which enhances the quality of their lives and where diversity is a source of strength rather than division.”
- 2.5 Its Spatial Framework identifies Bangor and Holywood as forming part of the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA) and identifies Newtownards as a Hub and a key commuter town to Belfast.
- 2.6 The continuing vision of the RDS for transportation is:  
‘to have a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the environment and which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone’s quality of life’<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.7 Through regional guidance the RDS seeks to deliver a balanced approach to transport infrastructure<sup>2</sup> (RG2) and to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate mitigation and adaptation to climate change whilst improving air quality<sup>3</sup> (RG9).
- 2.8 The spatial framework guidance seeks to manage the movement of people and goods within the BMUA (SFG4) through: managing travel demand within the BMUA; improving the public transport service; integration of land use and transportation; introduction of a rapid transit system; managing the efficient movement of freight; and improving facilities for walking and cycling which is co-ordinated with infrastructure investment<sup>4</sup>.
- 2.9 In relation to the rural area, the spatial framework guidance aims to improve accessibility for communities (SFG14). It highlights the need to improve the overall connectivity of rural communities in relation to services and to promote

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<sup>1</sup> RDS 2035 Para. 2.8 page 20

<sup>2</sup> RDS 2035 RG2 page 33

<sup>3</sup> RDS 2035 RG9 page 43

<sup>4</sup> RDS 2035 SPG4 page 59-60

integrated rural transport initiatives which meet the needs of those living in isolated areas - particularly elderly and disabled people<sup>5</sup>.

### Strategic Planning Policy Statement

- 2.10 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) was published by the Department of the Environment (DOE) in September 2015. The aims of the SPPS with regard to transportation are to secure improved integration with land-use planning and to facilitate safe and efficient access, movement and parking.
- 2.11 The Regional Strategic Objectives in the SPPS for transportation and land-use planning are to:
- promote sustainable patterns of development which reduce the need for motorised transport, encourages active travel, and facilitate travel by public transport in preference to the private car;
  - ensure accessibility for all, with the needs of people with disabilities and others whose mobility is impaired given particular consideration;
  - promote the provision of adequate facilities for cyclists in new development;
  - promote parking policies that will assist in reducing reliance on the private car and help tackle growing congestion;
  - protect routes required for new transport schemes including disused transport routes with potential for future reuse;
  - restrict the number of new accesses and control the level of use of existing accesses onto Protected Routes; and
  - promote road safety, in particular for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users.
- 2.12 The SPPS also states that LDPs should be informed by a local transport study and should address the following transportation issues:
- land use allocations and associated transport infrastructure;
  - key site requirements for zoned sites;
  - efficient movement of freight and storage;
  - new transport schemes, walking and cycling;
  - disused transport routes;
  - car parking; and
  - protected routes.

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<sup>5</sup> RDS 2035 SFG14 page 75

### Regional Transportation Strategy 2002-2012

- 2.13 An integral part of the original RDS was the preparation of a Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) 2002-2012. It supported the RDS and its vision for transportation. The RTS sets out a strategic framework for the future planning, funding and delivery of transportation and is implemented through three transport plans:
- Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTNTP);
  - Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP); and
  - Sub-Regional Transport Plan (SRTP).
- 2.14 The RTS was replaced in 2012 by 'Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future', but the three Transport Plans will remain material considerations until they are replaced by a new suite of transport plans produced by the Department for Infrastructure in association with the Council.

### Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future - A New Approach to Regional Transportation (2011)

- 2.15 This publication supersedes the Regional Transport Strategy and sets out how central government will develop regional transportation beyond 2015. It is the most up to date document on regional transportation.
- 2.16 The emphasis of approach for this document marks a move away from specific road building schemes identified in the RTS. It sets out three high level aims for the economy, society and the environment along with supporting objectives:

#### **Support the Growth of the Economy**

- Improve connectivity within the region;
- Use road space and railways more efficiently;
- Better maintain transport infrastructure;
- Improve access in our towns and cities;
- Improve access in rural areas;
- Improve connections to key tourism sites.

#### **Enhance the quality of life for all**

- Improve Safety;
- Enhance Social Inclusion;
- Develop transport programmes focussed on the user;

#### **Reduce the Environmental Impact of Transport**

- Reduce Greenhouse gas emissions from transport;
- Protect biodiversity;
- Reduce water, noise and air pollution;

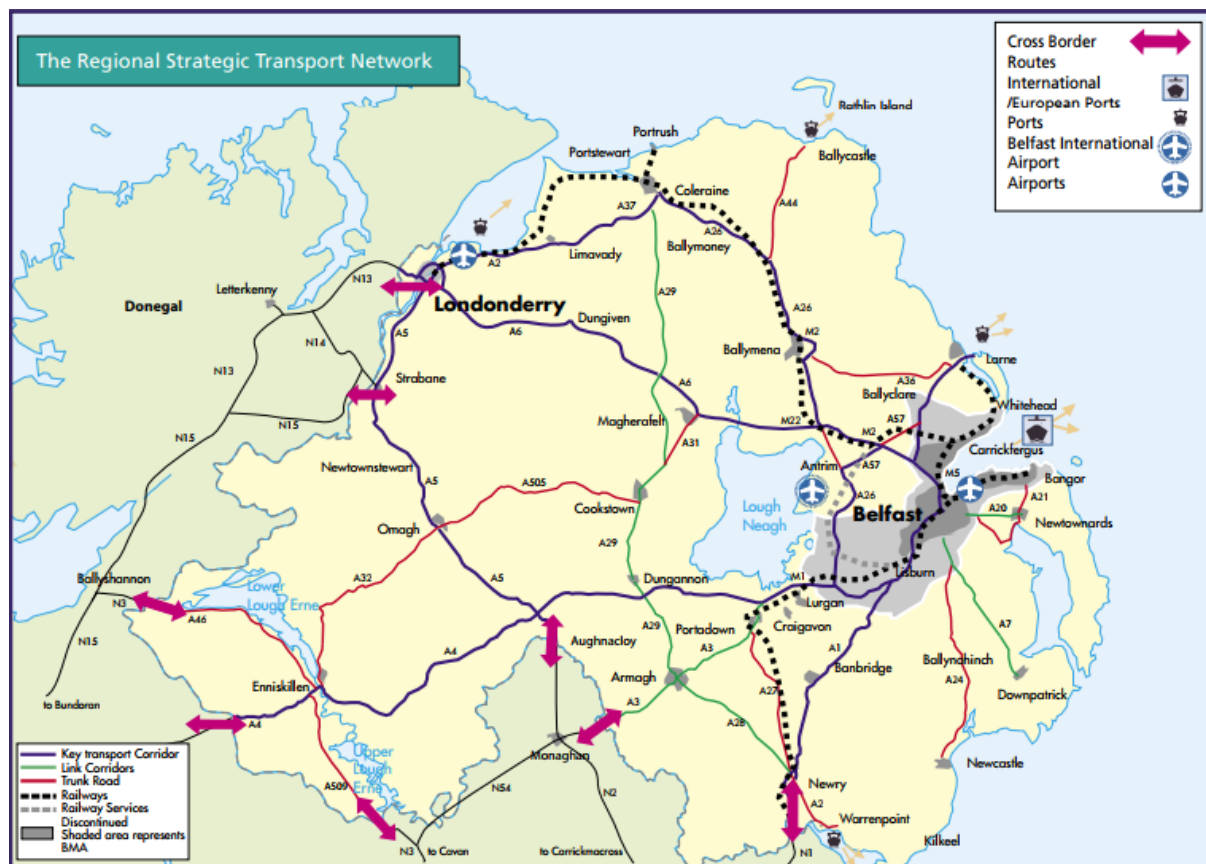
## Sub Regional Transport Plan 2015 (SRTP)

- 2.17 The SRTP was launched on 11th June 2007 and is based upon the guidance provided by the RDS and RTS. It covers the area outside the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA), and deals with the main transportation issues in rural and other urban areas, including the former Ards Council area.
- 2.18 The SRTP looked at public transport improvements to be made generally at a Northern Ireland wide level. This included: improved pedestrian links to public transport, refurbishment of stations, additional local bus services, bus stop improvements, additional car parking at stations; bus priority schemes; taxis; and an extension of door to door transport services for mobility impaired people.
- 2.19 The SRTP also included Local Transport Studies at local Council level. For Ards Borough Council this included Newtownards and Comber. The Local Transport Study gathered data from a range of sources including traffic surveys to identify problems. A range of measures were then proposed encompassing walking routes, cycling routes and highway schemes.
- 2.20 The rural areas of Northern Ireland are also considered within the SRTP. A range of measures were proposed including providing footways within settlements, providing at least one accessible bus stop within settlements and continued levels of investment in roads maintenance – particularly for those roads that link into the strategic road network.

## Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTN TP 2015)

- 2.21 The RSTNTP will remain a material consideration until replaced by the new suite of transport plans. It covers the complete rail network, five Key Transport Corridors, four link corridors, the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Corridors and the remainder of the trunk road network. The elements of the RSTN within Ards and North Down include: the rail network; the A20 link corridor between Newtownards and the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA); and two trunk roads - the A21 which links Bangor, Newtownards and Comber and the A22 linking Comber and other settlements to the BMA (see Map 1 below).

**Map 1: Regional Strategic Transport Network (Source: RSTN TP 2015)**



2.22 The RSTNTP also identified Strategic Road Improvements (SRIs). Completed SRIs in Ards and North Down include the Comber bypass and the Frederick Street link in Newtownards. In October 2023, Translink submitted a planning application for a 452 space Park & Ride on the site of the former Ards Leisure Centre at William Street/ Hardford Link to enhance the facilities and improve access to public transport in the Newtownards area.

**The Belfast Metropolitan Area Transport Plan 2015 (BMTP)**

2.23 The BMTP was published in 2004 and covered the Belfast Metropolitan Area for the time period until 2015. The BMTP developed alongside and integrated with the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP). Joint working arrangements ensured that the plans were mutually supportive and that land use and transportation proposals and strategies were co-ordinated and integrated.

2.24 The components of the 2015 Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan are described according to four modal themes:

1. **Provision for Walking and Cycling** – such as walking corridors and cycle routes;
2. **Public Transport measures** – such as bus and rail schemes;
3. **Highway measures** – such as road schemes; and
4. **Management measures** such as parking controls or traffic management used to control traffic and influence travel demands and patterns.

2.25 A number of the BMTP proposals specifically benefit Bangor/North Down (see Fig. A1 in Appendix) and include measures to:

- **Improve accessibility to Belfast and the rest of the BMA;**  
e.g. through improving rail services, development of Quality Bus Corridors, provision or enhancement of park-and-ride facilities, improved safety and efficiency on the A2, widening the A2, improvements to the A55 Outer Ring Road, introduction of Intelligent Transport Systems and Variable Message Signs, and improvements to junction capacity.
- **Encourage greater use of public transport and more walking and cycling and reduce the use of the car for local journeys in the Bangor area;**  
e.g. through the development of an integrated network of Quality Walking Routes and cycle routes including the provision of improved links to the bus/rail stations at Bangor and Holywood; improvements to local bus services, the expansion of park-and-ride facilities at the bus/rail station; and the promotion of improved public transport services that link retail outlets on the Bangor ring road and Bangor town centre.
- **Maintain and enhance the urban environment and economic vitality of Bangor, recognising its special characteristics as a tourist destination.**  
e.g. traffic management measures that aim to reduce the overall impact of traffic while maintaining accessibility for all modes of transport; together with more effective management of town centre car parking.

## [Planning Policy Statements and Supplementary Guidance](#)

### **Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS 3) – Access, Movement and Parking**

2.26 PPS3 sets out the regional planning policies for vehicular and pedestrian access, transport assessment, the protection of transport routes, and parking. It is also a material consideration in dealing with individual planning applications and appeals. The policies aim to ensure that there is greater integration of transportation and planning by promoting more sustainable

transport choices, promoting greater accessibility for all and; reducing the need to travel, especially by private car.

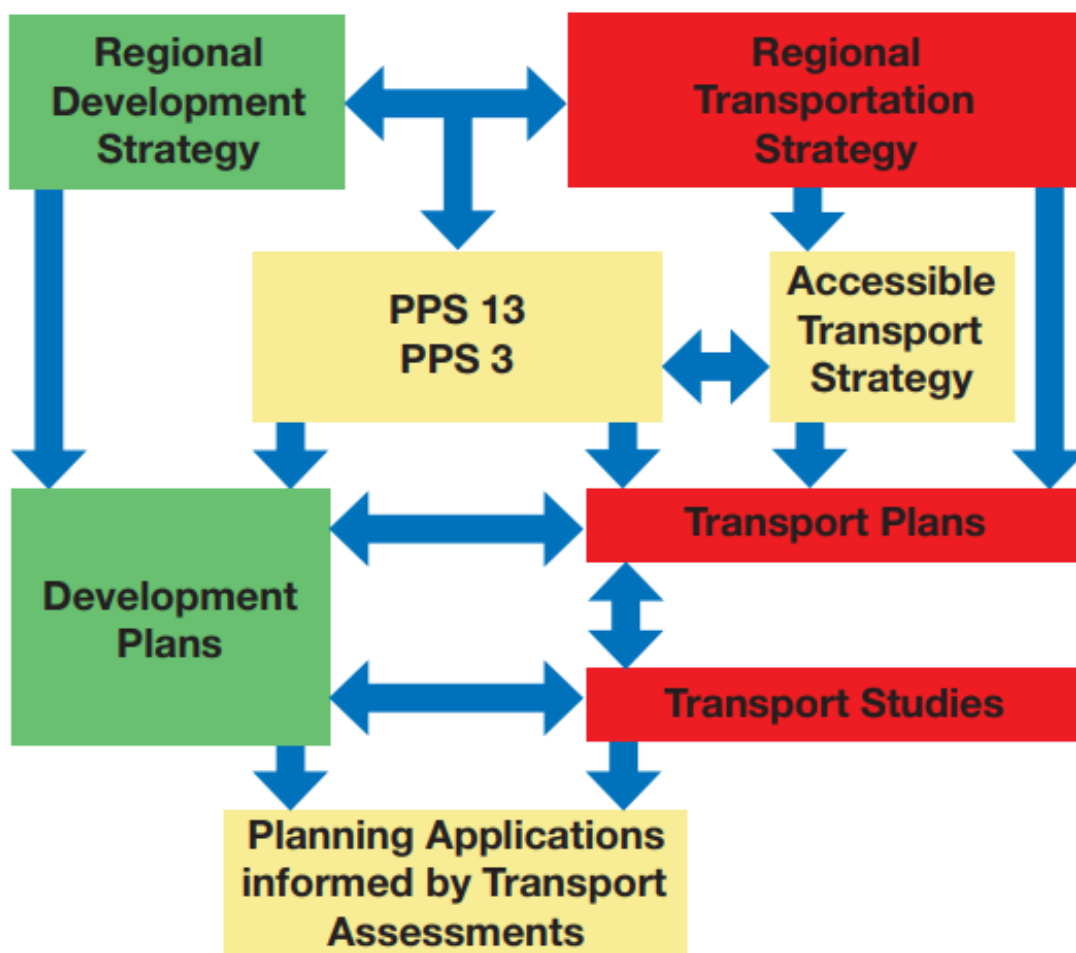
2.27 The main objectives of PPS3 are to-

- promote road safety, in particular, for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users;
- restrict the number of new accesses and control the level of use of existing accesses onto Protected Routes;
- make efficient use of road space within the context of promoting modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport;
- ensure that new development offers a realistic choice of access by walking, cycling and public transport, recognising that this may be less achievable in some rural areas;
- ensure the needs of people with disabilities and others whose mobility is impaired, are taken into account in relation to accessibility to buildings and parking provision;
- promote the provision of adequate facilities for cyclists in new development;
- promote parking policies that will assist in reducing reliance on the private car and help tackle growing congestion; and
- protect routes required for new transport schemes including disused transport routes with potential for future reuse.

### **Planning Policy Statement 13 (PPS 13) – Transportation and Land Use**

2.28 PPS13 was prepared to assist in the implementation of the RDS. It guides the integration of transportation and land use, particularly through the preparation of development plans and transport plans. The primary objective of this PPS is to integrate land use planning and 14 transport by: promoting sustainable transport choices; promoting accessibility for all; and reducing the need to travel, especially by private car. The PPS sets out 12 general principles to be applied to the planning and delivery of transportation and development.

2.29 The relationship between this PPS and other parts of the land use and transportation planning system is illustrated in the following diagram:-



2.30 Supplementary planning guidance on transportation including access, movement and parking is provided by the following documents which are retained until such time as their review by DfI:

- Parking Standards (DOE, DRD, 2005);
- Creating Places: Achieving Quality in Residential Developments (DOE, DRD, 2000);
- Building on Tradition: A Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside (DOE, 2012);
- Living Places: An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland (DOE, 2014);
- Transport Assessment: Guideline for Development Proposals in Northern Ireland (DOE, 2006);
- Design and Access Statements – A guide for Northern Ireland (2012);
- DCAN 15: Vehicular Access Standards (DOE, 1999)

### [Northern Ireland Changing Gear: A Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland](#)

- 2.31 The Bicycle Strategy sets out a 25 year (2015-2040), high level plan to make Northern Ireland a cycling community. The vision is “A community where people have the freedom and confidence to travel by bicycle for everyday journeys”. The Strategy has a 3 pillar approach; build, support and promote, aiming to build a comprehensive network for the bicycle, support people who choose to travel by bicycle and promote the bicycle as a mode of transport for everyday journeys.

### [Exercise Explore Enjoy a Strategic Plan for Greenways \(2016\)](#)

- 2.32 This document sets out a high-level plan for Northern Ireland to enable people to link to places locally, regionally and nationally by active modes of transport. The aim of this Strategic Plan is to encourage a substantial increase in the number of people walking and cycling as a regular part of everyday life through the building of a connected and accessible regional Greenway Network which significantly increases the length of traffic free routes. To achieve the aim of this Strategic Plan, the following overarching objectives: 1. To improve health and wellbeing by creating opportunities for exercise in developing greenways; 2. To increase the areas and populations that have access to and the use of greenways; 3. To increase safety for people walking and cycling; 4. To improve opportunities for social inclusion and interaction; and 5. To provide opportunities for the development of local economies.

## **3.0 LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT**

### [The Big Plan for Ards and North Down 2017-2032](#)

- 3.1 The Big Plan is the Community Plan, providing an overarching framework setting out a shared vision and ambition that Ards and North Down’s Strategic Community Planning Partnership has agreed to work towards over the next 15 years. The vision of the plan is that Ards and North Down is a vibrant, connected, healthy, safe, and prosperous place to be.
- 3.2 The overarching, cross-cutting ambition of The Big Plan is ‘To have empowered, resilient individuals and communities, to reduce inequality; to promote good relations and sustainability; and to improve the accessibility of all public services.’

- 3.3 The Big Plan contains five outcomes that the Plan hopes will reflect the position of the borough by 2032. The following outcomes of 'The Big Plan' link to transportation within the Borough-
- Outcome 1- All people in Ards and North Down benefit from opportunities to fulfil their lifelong potential.
  - Outcome 4 - All people in Ards and North Down benefit from a prosperous and inclusive economy.
  - Outcome 5- All people in Ards and North Down benefit from an environment that is values, well-managed and accessible.
- 3.4 Part 2 of the 'Big Plan' was published in April 2022 as a scheduled 4 yearly review. This review highlighted that many of the priorities previously identified such as poverty and mental health were highlighted as the most pressing issues during the previous 4 years exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.5 The Local Government Act 2014 through an amendment to Section 8 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 introduced a statutory requirement that the preparation of the LDP must take account of the Community Plan. The LDP will work in tandem with 'The Big Plan' providing the spatial framework to achieve the shared vision for the Borough.

#### [Ards and North Down Corporate Plan 2024-2028: A Sustainable Borough](#)

- 3.6 The priorities of the corporate plan are closely aligned to those within 'The Big Plan', the community plan for Ards and North Down, which sets out a long-term vision for Council, local organisations and communities to work towards. The Corporate Plan aims to see progress towards a sustainable Borough through innovation in services and greater partnerships with residents and other organisations. The plan is driven by three corporate priorities: Economic- increasing growth by attracting more jobs and businesses, Environmental- reducing carbon emissions as we transition to net zero and, Social- improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reducing inequalities.
- 3.7 These corporate priorities are linked to seven outcomes the Council wants to achieve. Of particular relevance to the topic of transportation are Outcome 2: An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero targets, Outcome 3: A thriving and sustainable economy and Outcome 4: A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for our citizens, visitors, businesses and investors.

### [The Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development 2018-2030 \(Ards and North Down Borough Council\)](#)

- 3.8 The Integrated Strategy presents a vision for the pursuit of prosperity in the Borough of Ards and North Down. The Strategy talks about placemaking and the importance of quality planning and design. Urban stewardship is highlighted as playing an important role in urban regeneration.
- 3.9 The Integrated Strategy takes a lead from the Borough's Community Plan and identifies six thematic priorities. One of these thematic priorities for the economy to grow and the Borough to flourish is to connect our places and people.

### [Local Transport Study \(LTS\)](#)

- 3.10 The Department for Infrastructure has undertaken a Transport Study of the five Councils that make up the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan Area. The purpose of this study is to set out an objective evidence-based assessment of current and future transport issues in the context of the Council's growth ambitions. This process was initially intended to provide an evidence base and strategic direction to local development plan teams however this is now being taken forward through the Eastern Transport Plan as detailed below.

### [The Eastern Transport Plan 2035 \(ETP\)](#)

- 3.11 The ETP replaces the BMTP covering five council areas including Ards and North Down. The Plan aims to ensure that the transport network meets the need of the people and businesses living, working and visiting the ETP area, both now and into the future. The plan moves beyond attempting to predict future movement demands and providing the required new roads and public transport services to make radical changes that address issues arising from the environmental emergency and other societal problems related to an over reliance on cars. This new approach shifts the focus to creating places for people, built around a healthy, safe and carbon neutral vision for the future.
- 3.12 The Eastern Transport Plan is being prepared by DfI Transport Planning and Modelling Unit (TPMU) collaboratively with the Local Development Plan team. The vision of the plan is to;

'Deliver an integrated and re-balanced transport network in favour of sustainable, efficient modes, which connects communities creating an accessible, inclusive, safe and prosperous economic region by delivering carbon reduction, improving air quality, enhancing the built and natural environment and facilitating healthy and sustainable travel choices over unnecessary private car travel.'

- 3.13 In order to achieve this, seven objectives have been set:
1. Reduce travel distances by promoting safe, inclusive and connected neighbourhoods, supported by integrated planning.
  2. Deliver a reduction in carbon emissions by increasing accessibility for all to jobs, services and recreation by sustainable travel modes.
  3. Promote healthy and inclusive communities by developing safe and sustainable travel modes that respect the local built and natural environment.
  4. Reduce unnecessary use of the private car by implementing effective demand management measures.
  5. Improve air quality and the environment by encouraging the use of sustainable travel modes and vehicles which utilise sustainable fuels.
  6. Enhance the resilience and safety of the transport network to support the economy and meet the challenges of climate change.
- 3.14 Ards and North Down Borough Council will continue to work with TPMU to deliver the ETP alongside the Local Development Plan.

#### [Active Travel Network Delivery Plan](#)

- 3.15 The Department for Infrastructure is currently preparing an active travel network delivery plan considering a holistic approach to active travel, network planning, design, delivery and behavioural change. This delivery plan along with local transport plans will ensure a comprehensive and multi-modal transportation network across Northern Ireland.

## **4.0 EXTANT AREA PLANS**

- 4.1 It should be noted that the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP) was adopted in September 2014 but was subsequently quashed as a result of a judgment in the Court of Appeal delivered on 18 May 2017. As a consequence of this, the North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984-1995, the Belfast Urban Area Plan, and Bangor Town Centre Plan 1995 are now the statutory Development Plans for the North Down area with draft BMAP remaining a material consideration. These plans remain extant until replaced by the new Local Development Plan (LDP) for the Borough. The existing plans are an important consideration in the LDP process, as they provide a starting point for the review of our spatial planning options.

#### Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (dBMAP)

- 4.2 Volume 7 of draft BMAP sets out policies for (former) North Down District. Draft BMAP was complemented by the measures contained within the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) for the Plan Area and integrates land use allocations with existing and proposed transportation infrastructure (e.g. housing and employment zonings). Many of the zoned sites have key site requirements in relation to the provision of transport infrastructure.
- 4.3 Draft BMAP included the following five Transport Policies:
- TRAN 1 – Public Transport, Walking and Cycling
  - TRAN 2 – Planning Protection for Transportation Schemes
  - TRAN 3 – Road Abandonments
  - TRAN 4 – Parking Standards within Areas of Parking Restraint
  - TRAN 5 – Publicly Owned Off-street Surface Car Parks within City and Town Centres
- 4.4 A number of Community Greenways are proposed in draft BMAP for the North Down area. These include two in Bangor at Ballycrochan Walkway and Bangor Parks Walkway, and one in Holywood. Community Greenways seek to re-establish corridor links between parks and natural areas to create networks of urban open space. They provide places for both recreation and exercise alongside opportunities for pedestrian and cycle routes.

#### Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 (ADAP)

- 4.5 The ADAP was adopted in 2009 and relates to the legacy Ards Borough Council area. The Ards and Down Area Plan seeks to address strategic guidance on transportation and land use integration by including the reduction of demand for peak time travel among those factors which determine the spatial allocation of growth. It does so for example, by focusing a high proportion of growth into towns in the Plan area, and particularly into the main towns which have the greatest potential for investment in employment. The Plan also gives high priority to maintaining compact urban areas and it proposes the safeguarding of routes which could be important in the continual development of transport infrastructure.
- 4.6 ADAP 2015 contains 2 strategic policies in relation to transportation:
- TRAN 1 - Planning protection for road schemes
  - TRAN 2 - Development reliant on the provision of road schemes.
- 4.7 The Ards and Down Area Plan indicates that disused transport tracks (primarily rail track beds) offer potential for transportation purposes or for recreation, leisure or tourism. The Plan cites the Comber greenway as an example of re-use.

## 5.0 CROSS BOUNDARY POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 Throughout the LDP process it has been important to take the position of other councils and particularly our neighbouring councils into account. Ards and North Down Borough is bounded by Belfast City, Lisburn and Castlereagh City and Newry, Mourne and Down Council areas, each of which is at different stages in the formulation of their own LDP.

Table 1: Neighbouring Councils Position on Transportation

Neighbouring Council	Position
Belfast City Council	<p>Belfast City Council Local Development Plan Strategy was adopted on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023.</p> <p>BCC seeks to support an additional 46,000 jobs and approximately 31,600 new homes over the 15-year plan period from 2020-2035. BCC understands that a high quality, integrated, multimodal transportation system is essential in supporting Belfast's role as the regional economic driver for NI and the main employment and retail centre.</p> <p>The draft Plan Strategy contains a Strategic Policy relating to transport entitled 'Policy SP7 Connectivity' this sets out the Councils intention to support connectivity to and within the city by sustainable transport modes, such as public transport, walking and cycling. This strategic policy also states that land for sustainable transport infrastructure projects will be safeguarded and that opportunities to protect and enhance existing provision will be maximised. Underpinning this Strategic Policy is several policies, namely;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TRAN 1-Active travel - walking and cycling</li> <li>TRAN 2- Creating an accessible environment</li> <li>TRAN 3- Transport assessment</li> <li>TRAN 4- Travel plan</li> <li>TRAN 5- New transport schemes</li> <li>TRAN 6- Access to public roads</li> <li>TRAN 7- Access to protected routes</li> </ul>

	<p>TRAN 8- Car parking and servicing arrangements  TRAN 9- Parking standards within areas of parking restraint  TRAN 10- Design of car parking  TRAN 11- Provision of public and private car parks  TRAN 12- Temporary car parks</p> <p>These policies seek to deliver sustainable patterns of development, protect routes for future routes or improvements and facilitate active travel.</p>
<p>Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council</p>	<p>The Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Local Development Plan Strategy was adopted on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023.</p> <p>The following policies address transportation-</p> <p>TRA1- Creating an Accessible Environment  TRA2- Access to Public Roads  TRA3- Access to Protected Routes  TRA4- Protection for New Transport Schemes  TRA5- Strategic Greenways and Disused Transport Routes  TRA6- Transport Assessment  TRA7- Car Parking and Servicing Arrangements in New Developments  TRA8- Active Travel Networks and Infrastructure Provision  TRA9- Park and Ride/Park and Share Car Parks  TRA10- Provision of Public and Private Car Parks  TRA11- Temporary Car Parks</p> <p>These policies seek to support sustainable transport and other infrastructure.</p>
<p>Newry, Mourne and Down District Council</p>	<p>The NM&amp;D draft Plan Strategy was published on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2025.</p> <p>The Plan contains a Transport Strategy underpinning the Spatial Growth Strategy. This is underpinned by the following policies-</p> <p>TRA1- Creating an Accessible Environment</p>

	<p>TRA2- Access to Public Roads</p> <p>TRA3- Access to Protected Routes</p> <p>TRA4- Protection of New Transport Schemes</p> <p>TRA5- Disused Transport Routes</p> <p>TRA6- Transport Assessment</p> <p>TRA7- Car Parking and Servicing Arrangements</p> <p>TRA8- Active Travel</p> <p>TRA9- Design of Car Parking</p> <p>TRA10- Provision of Public and Private Car Parking</p> <p>TRA11- Temporary Car Parks</p> <p>The strategy and policies seek to promote integration between transportation and new development, promote opportunities for sustainable travel and protect strategically important transportation routes.</p>
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- 5.2 The Council has engaged with each neighbouring Council’s POP consultation as well as the dPS consultations of Belfast City Council and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council.
- 5.3 Professional officers from the LDP team also take part in a number of cross council forums including the Metropolitan Spatial Working Group and the Development Plan Working Group.
- 5.4 Most recently, online engagement on the Council’s draft Plan Strategy was held with the three neighbouring councils in March 2025. This included discussion around the proposed growth strategy, strategic housing and employment land allocation, settlement hierarchy, strategic approach to climate change and mitigation, alongside operational policies. This included the identification of specific cross-boundary issues.

## **6.0 PROFILE OF TRANSPORTATION IN ARDS AND NORTH DOWN**

- 6.1 The entirety of the Borough lies within the Belfast Travel to Work Area (TTW). Travel to Work Areas are zones defined where the bulk of their resident population work within the same area. The fundamental criterion used in their creation is that, of the resident economically active population,

at least 75 per cent actually work in the area, and also, that of everyone working in the area, at least 75 per cent actually live in the area. The main commuter routes include the A2 Belfast to Bangor Road which carries significant volumes of traffic, the A20 Belfast to Newtownards Road and the Belfast to Bangor train line.

### Public transport

- 6.2 The Department for Infrastructure has overall responsibility for public transport policy and transport in Northern Ireland, as well as responsibility for the safety and operating standards of road passenger transport providers and licensing of bus routes. The majority of public transport services in Northern Ireland are provided by subsidiary companies of the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC) such as Ulsterbus, Metro and Northern Ireland Railways under the umbrella brand name of Translink.
- 6.3 Ulsterbus operates throughout the Council area and a small area of Holywood is covered by Belfast Metro Services. There are bus stations located in Bangor and Newtownards. Bus services cover most of the towns, villages, and small settlements within the Borough, and connect to either Bangor or Newtownards. There are also town services in Bangor, Donaghadee, Newtownards and Comber. Bangor has specific services linking it with Stormont, and with the Ulster Hospital.
- 6.4 Rail services are operated by Northern Ireland Railways (NIR). Within the Borough there is a railway station in Bangor which links directly with Belfast and connects to the Dublin rail line and all other NIR lines. There are also a number of rail halts including: Bangor West, Carnalea, Helen's Bay, Seahill, Cultra, Marino and Holywood.

### Highways

- 6.5 The Department for Infrastructure maintains, manages and develops Northern Ireland's transportation network. There are no motorways located within the Borough. There is an extensive road network throughout the Council area, with strong linkages to Belfast from both Bangor and Newtownards. The remainder of the road network comprises both 'B' class and minor roads – both classified and unclassified (see Table 2 below).

**Table 2: Lengths of Roads in Ards and North Down and Northern Ireland 2023/24 (Source: NISRA, 2024)**

	Road Length (km)	Motorway Road Length (km)	A Roads: Dual Carriageway Road Length (km)	A Roads: Single Carriageway Road Length (km)	B Roads: Road Length (km)	C Roads: Road Length (km)	Unclassified Road Length (km)
Ards & North Down	1,177.6	0	26.4	136.3	57.8	165.6	791.5
Northern Ireland	25,922.5	114.7	269.9	2,041.4	2,928.8	4,728.3	15,839.3

### Protected Routes

6.6 The Ards and North Down Borough Council area contains a number of Protected Routes. The number of new accesses and the level of use of existing accesses onto Protected Routes is controlled through planning policy. Designation of protected routes is not within the remit of the Local Development Plan. A map of protected routes is available on the Department for Infrastructure website.

### Private Car Ownership

6.7 Table 2 below shows that the percentage of households owning one or more private vehicles is higher within Ards and North Down than within Northern Ireland as a whole. This may reflect the relative affluence of the Borough where the average salary exceeds the NI average. It may also reflect the rural nature of much of the southern portion of the Borough as rural locations typically are not well served by public transport and hence have greater reliance on private vehicles. The private car is likely to remain the dominant mode of transportation over the Plan period in rural areas.

**Table 3: Percentage of Households Owning One or More Private Vehicles Car Ownership**

	Ards and North Down Percentage	Northern Ireland Percentage
<b>No Car/Van</b>	15	20
<b>1 Car/Van</b>	41	40
<b>2 Car/Van</b>	32	29
<b>3 Car/Van</b>	8	8
<b>4 Car/Van</b>	2	3
<b>5+ Car/Van</b>	<1	1

Source: NINIS 2021 Census

6.8 The 2021 Census shows that of the residents in employment in Ards and North Down 62% travelled to work by driving a car or van, and 4% as a passenger or as part of a car pool. This gives a total of 66% travelling to work in cars.

### Ferry

**Figure 1: Strangford Ferry**



(Source: Ards and North Down Borough Council)

6.9 The Strangford Ferry provides an important transport link for the Borough. To travel the distance between Portaferry and Strangford by road is

approximately 75 kilometres and takes approximately 90 minutes. By contrast, the ferry has a typical crossing time of about eight minutes. The Department for Infrastructure operates the ferry service across Strangford Lough between the villages of Portaferry to Strangford in the neighbouring Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. A new £5.7m ferry 'Strangford II' commenced service in February 2017. It has capacity for 27 cars and 260 passengers. The ferry runs a regular service throughout the day for 364 days a year with 22,773 scheduled sailings and an additional off schedule service during the morning peak.

- 6.10 A pilot scheme for a zero-emission commuter ferry service between Bangor and Belfast is anticipated to commence in 2025.

### Airport

- 6.11 Newtownards Airport is one of only 5 licensed airports in Northern Ireland. It offers landing facilities for light aircraft and helicopters. The airfield is managed by the Ulster Flying Club which is one of the largest, non-commercial training, flying organisations in Northern Ireland.

### Cycling

- 6.12 The National Cycle Network is a series of safe, traffic-free paths and quiet on-road cycling and walking routes that connect to every major town and city in the UK. Northern Ireland has a total proposed length of over 1,400 kilometres of which more than 848 kilometres have been constructed to date.
- 6.13 The main cycle routes in the Borough are:
- The Strangford Lough Trail - an 82 mile circular route in and around Strangford Lough and part of national Cycle Route 99;
  - The Comber Greenway - a 7 mile traffic free section of the National Cycle Network along the old Belfast to Comber railway line;
  - National Cycle Network Route 93 North Down, from Bangor to Newtownards; and
  - Regional Route 20 between Comber and Downpatrick.
- 6.14 In August 2015 the '[Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland](#)' was launched, with its vision as "A community where people have the freedom and confidence to travel by bicycle for every day journeys". The strategy promotes the development of a three pillar approach for the development of cycling which includes building a comprehensive cycle network, supporting those who wish to cycle, and promoting the bike as a mode of everyday transport.

### Walking

- 6.15 Walking is primarily facilitated throughout the urban areas of the Borough by the footways along the road network. Some of these are designated as 'Highways to Health' schemes established by the Department of Health across Northern Ireland.
- 6.16 All of the towns within the Borough have undergone major town centre public realm schemes. These schemes have had success in improving pedestrian accessibility as well as the overall pedestrian environment. However, many of our town centres are dominated by the existing road network to the detriment of pedestrian priority and the overall sense of place.
- 6.17 The Borough benefits from the Comber Greenway, a 7-mile green corridor from Comber to East Belfast along the former Belfast-Comber railway line. This was Northern Ireland's first greenway route and has proven to be so successful that plans are progressing for additional greenway routes or upgrades throughout the Borough; Comber to Newtownards, Newtownards to Green Road, Kinnegar to Donaghadee and Green Road to Donaghadee. These proposals represent a total investment of £20million in green infrastructure with some of this cost being met by the Department for Infrastructure.
- 6.18 The Ulster Way, a 636-mile walking route throughout Northern Ireland incorporates most of the towns and villages in the Borough.
- 6.19 The Council is currently developing Community Trails in the Ards Peninsula in conjunction with Peninsula Healthy Living Partnership and Outscape (formerly Outdoor Recreation NI). Community Trails connect communities to outdoor spaces or connect different communities together (i.e. connect two villages together). They provide opportunities for walking and cycling and can be used for commuting, shopping, exercise or enjoying leisure time.

### Taxi Services

- 6.20 Taxi services provide an important transport service throughout most areas of the Borough particularly in the main towns.

### Community Transport

- 6.21 Community Transport is a term covering a wide range of solutions usually developed to cover a specifically identified transport need, typically run by the local community for local neighbourhoods on a not-for-profit basis. Community transport provides the connectivity needed to get otherwise isolated or excluded groups of people to a range of destinations,

and helps to develop sustainable communities. It is often provided through minibuses and volunteer car schemes.

- 6.22 Down Community Transport offers a Dial a Lift and Group Transport throughout the Borough. The Dial a Lift Service offers a door-to-door service between 8am - 6pm, Monday to Friday. The service can be used to access employment, training, health services, other local services and recreational facilities. The Group Transport Scheme offers minibus hire for member groups such as older people, youth groups, community associations, sporting groups, church groups, local charities.
- 6.23 Disability Action operates a local urban transport service for people with disabilities or for those who find it difficult using mainstream public transport. Membership is free but a fare is charged for each trip taken. The towns of Bangor, Newtownards, Holywood, Donaghadee, and Comber and a small area of their hinterland are covered by the scheme.
- 6.24 The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service runs a Patient Transport Service. The service is a non-emergency patient transport service which operates across the province. This enables patients with a medical to get to routine appointments at hospitals and treatment centres throughout Northern Ireland.

#### Car Parking

- 6.25 Off-street parking became the responsibility of the Council from 1 April 2015 whilst on-street parking has remained the responsibility of the Department for Infrastructure. At present the Council has 40 free to use and 22 charged car parks.
- 6.26 The Council appointed AECOM to develop an off street car parking strategy for the Borough focussing on the main towns of Bangor, Newtownards, Holywood, Comber and Donaghadee as well as the villages throughout the Council area. The purpose of the strategy is to consider the availability, accessibility and convenience of parking throughout the Borough.
- 6.27 The Strategy establishes 6 objectives which seek to ensure that parking supports town centre economic investment, vitality and tourism and encourages users to park in the correct locations. The objectives also aim to make day to day parking possible for all types of users, utilise technology and help to support sustainable forms of transport.
- 6.28 The strategy also addresses concerns raised through the consultation such as a lack of parking for motorhomes and suggests actions to be taken by private

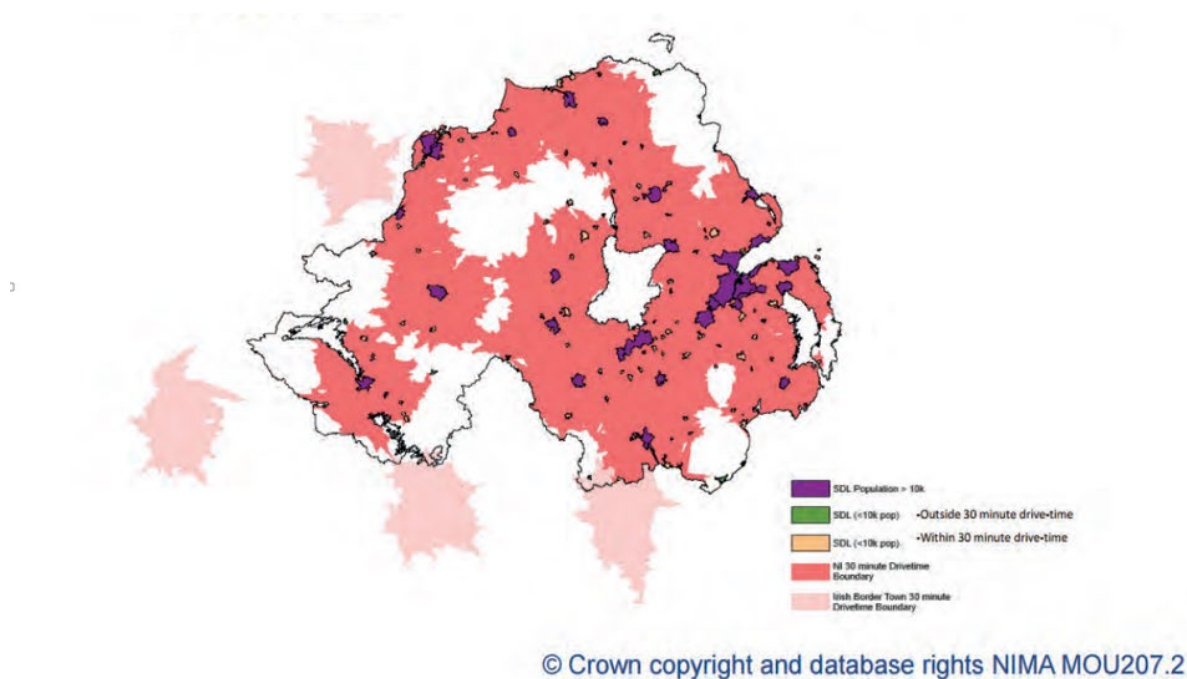
parking providers, Dfl and Translink including reviewing on street parking and provision of additional park and ride facilities.

- 6.29 The Strategy identifies that the existing car parks need considerable investment to make them fit for purpose. A range of actions to be undertaken including a review of parking features, implementation of a monitoring strategy, provision of appropriate parking for disabled users, providing appropriate parking signage, security and lighting. It is also proposed to develop SMART parking provision and increased electric vehicle charging provision at key car parks throughout the Borough.

#### Accessibility

- 6.30 As part of the preliminary LDP preparatory work, Dfl prepared Accessibility Maps for the five towns in the Borough. These maps illustrate travel times within and to the main towns by different modes of transport - walking, cycling, drive time and public transport - to a defined town centre location. The accessibility maps can help to inform the LDP plan making process by emphasising appropriate locations for future development in relation to sustainable travel distances. They will be used as one consideration in the assessment of the potential locations of future development where such a need is identified.

### Map 3: 30-minute drive-time boundary from settlements with population of over 10,000



(Source: Review of the Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements. NISRA March 2015)

6.31 Rural areas within the Borough experience accessibility issues. Map 3 above shows the 30-minute drive time boundary from main settlements. It clearly demonstrates an issue around accessibility in the southern half of the Ards Peninsula. The main Portaferry Road between Newtownards and Portaferry is sometimes closed due to bad weather in the winter – further exacerbating accessibility issues and increasing journey times.

6.32 The rural areas within the Borough also suffer from less regular public transport services.

#### Emerging trends - ultra-low emission vehicles

6.33 The UK government is working towards the reduction of vehicle emissions by promoting public transport choices, supporting the market for innovative forms of transport and encouraging a move to cleaner and lower carbon vehicles. There are a relatively small number of public charging points for electric vehicles located within the Borough. (Viewable link - <https://esb.ie/what-we-do/ecars-ni/charge-point-map>). The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Action Plan for Northern Ireland was published in November 2022 as a key action of The Executive Energy Strategy (The Path to Net Zero

Energy). A task-force agreed a series of key actions and will continue to review the provision of EV infrastructure and bring forward further actions necessary as the EV market evolves and more learnings become available. At the end of 2023, 7 new rapid EV chargers were installed in Ards and North Down with European Union funding from the INTERREG VA programme which is managed by the Special EU Programmes Body match funded by the Department for Infrastructure.

## 7.0 PREFERRED OPTIONS PAPER

7.1 The Preferred Options Paper (POP), published in March 2019 was the first formal stage in the preparation of the LDP for the Borough. It was designed to promote debate in relation to a range of strategic planning issues that have been identified in the Borough. The POP identified 42 key planning issues within the Borough and examined options for addressing these issues. In each case, a preferred option was highlighted and the rationale for selection of this option was given.

7.2 The POP also includes a review of the existing operational planning policies, largely contained within the suite of Planning Policy Statements. This review stimulated public debate on whether the existing policies are still suitable or whether a different approach would be more appropriate to meet local circumstances.

7.3 Following a minor revision to the online version of the POP, the 12-week consultation period was relaunched and therefore the total consultation period from the official launch was 19 weeks.

### POP Representations

7.4 The following key issues identified in the POP refer to transportation:

#### **Key Issue 38: Sustainable Transport and Active Travel**

7.5 The preferred option was to introduce a policy requiring applicants to demonstrate how the promotion of sustainable transport and active travel has been considered in all new development proposals. Where appropriate, specific measures will be detailed for zoned sites in key site requirements. The alternative option was to retain existing policy which relates only to residential development over a certain threshold. Of those who responded to the relevant question in the POP questionnaire, 48% agreed with the proposed option, 41% disagreed and 11% were unsure. Translink strongly agreed with this option. Statutory consultees were also supportive.

### **Key Issue 39: Promotion of sustainable travel**

- 7.6 The preferred option was to identify suitable sites for park and ride/ park and share facilities. The alternative option was to retain the existing proposed sites as designated in extant plans. Of those who responded to the relevant question in the POP questionnaire, 87% agreed with the proposed option, 9% disagreed and 4% were unsure. Translink stated in their response that the park and ride/ park and share sites identified in the POP were unlikely to be the preferred option taken forward. Statutory consultees were generally supportive, DfI stated that further consideration should be given to the interrelationship with this issue and key issue 40, by introducing areas of parking restraint.

### **Key Issue 40: Reducing reliance on the private car**

- 7.7 The preferred option was to introduce areas of parking restraint in our town centres and other areas, where appropriate to local circumstances. The alternative was to not introduce any areas of parking restraint. Of those who responded to the relevant question in the POP questionnaire, 45% agreed with the proposed option, 41% disagreed and 14% were unsure. Statutory consultees were supportive of this option.

### **Key Issue 41: Protection of proposed routes for transport schemes**

- 7.8 The only option proposed was to continue to protect proposed routes for future transport schemes as identified within the extant area plans. This option aligns with the SPPS to safeguard identified lands to protect them from development which may jeopardise delivery of future transport schemes. Of those who responded to the relevant question in the POP questionnaire, 64% agreed with the proposed option, 18% disagreed and 18% were unsure. Statutory consultees were supportive of this option.

### **Key Issue 42: Disused transport routes**

- 7.9 The only option proposed was to identify and safeguard disused former transport routes for future use for transport or recreational, nature conservation or tourism related uses. This is in line with the SPPS to protect disused transport routes and the promotion of active travel in cases where there is no reasonable prospect of the route being used for future transport purposes. Of those who responded to the relevant question in the POP questionnaire, 96% agreed with the proposed option and 4% disagreed.
- 7.10 For further details on the POP consultation, please see the Consultation Report, published on the Council's website.

### Consultee and Councillor Engagement

- 7.11 In order to meet the requirements of Planning Act relating to the need for the Plan Strategy to take account of the RDS, other policy and guidance issued by the Department and other relevant government strategies and plans; Council has engaged key consultees representing relevant central government departments and agencies.

### Department for Infrastructure

- 7.12 The DfI response to the POP was largely supportive of the preferred options, welcoming that sustainable transport and active travel is at the heart of the Council's approach to transportation. In order to be sufficiently flexible to deal with changing circumstances, DfI Planning noted the SPPS requirement to identify planned improvements to the transport network as well as protecting routes for future schemes identified in legacy development plans. DfI TPMU commented that applicants should demonstrate how the promotion of sustainable transport and active travel has been maximised, rather than considered, in all new development proposals.
- 7.13 DfI Transport Modelling and Policy Unit (TPMU) responded to the POP with generally supportive comments however wished to see the language used in the sustainable transport and active travel policy to be strengthened from 'has been considered' to 'has been maximised'. The Council has met with TPMU on many occasions, initially in relation to the Local Transport Study, and more recently in relation to the development of the Eastern Transport Plan and other initiative such as the Active Travel Delivery Plan. Engagement has also been held with DfI Roads. DfI TPMU also has representation on the Metropolitan Working Group which Council attends.

### Translink

- 7.14 The POP response from Translink was largely supportive of the preferred options. They stated that developer contributions in addition to securing infrastructure should also be able to be secured to support necessary transport services such as enhanced town bus services. It was highlighted that the park and ride/ park and share sites currently identified are unlikely to be the preferred options going forward however that land for proposals emerging through the updated Regional Strategic Transport Plan and the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (now the Eastern Transport Plan) should be protected.

### Council and Councillor Engagement

- 7.15 Representatives from relevant Council departments have also been engaged to ensure that due account has been taken of Council's Community Plan, as

well as other Council strategies and initiatives. Officers from the LDP team have taken part in a series of Community Plan thematic group meetings and engagement events. Furthermore, members of the community plan team have also attended LDP workshops and sustainability appraisal meetings.

- 7.16 The Planning Act requires the Plan Strategy to be adopted by resolution of the Council, following approval by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). Accordingly, Elected Members have also been engaged in the development of draft Plan Strategy, to ensure that the document is generally aligned with Council's strategic priorities. This engagement was facilitated through three separate workshops – one delivered in person and the other two delivered remotely due to Covid-19. The first workshop focused on capacity building in relation to the topic of planning and transportation in advance of the publication of the POP. The second event was centred around policy development and took place in January 2020. The third event was a virtual presentation on all strategic policy in September 2022.
- 7.17 The draft Plan Strategy, which included the strategic approach and operational policies for transportation, was presented in confidence and agreed in principle by Elected Members at a full Council meeting in September 2022. Post Sustainability Appraisal (SA) A further advanced publication draft of the Plan Strategy was presented and agreed at a special Planning Committee held on 20 January 2025 and ratified at the full Council meeting on 29 January 2025.

#### Development Management Team

- 7.18 The LDP team has engaged with Development Management (DM) colleagues throughout the preparation of the draft Plan Strategy with an initial meeting occurring in January 2020 in advance of workshopping policy with Elected Members. The general consensus was that the existing policies for transportation are working well albeit there has been concern over how to manage multiple proposals which rely on the same public parking to make up for a shortfall in provision. The new policy in relation to the promotion of active travel and sustainable transport was discussed with regards to its practicability with colleagues emphasising the need for a proportionate approach.

## 8.0 DRAFT PLAN STRATEGY APPROACH

- 8.1 The overall approach of the draft Plan Strategy builds on the POP and representations received, consultation with DM colleagues, statutory consultees and Elected Members. It takes into account the regional direction

set out for transportation in the RDS and SPPS, whilst supporting the vision and objectives of the ETP. The iterative SA process was also invaluable in finetuning the language.

### **Supporting Active Travel and Sustainable Transport**

- 8.2 The draft Plan Strategy brings forward a new policy that requires applicants to demonstrate how they have maximised promoting active travel and use of sustainable transport options in all new developments. This policy has been revised since POP stage to reflect comments from DfI TPMU that the language should be strengthened from ‘consider’ to ‘maximise’. The policy emphasises a proportionate approach and provides examples of measures that may be included. It is envisaged that SPG will provide further guidance in tandem with the development of DfI’s Active Travel Delivery Plan and forthcoming design guidance.

### **Creating an Accessible Environment**

- 8.3 The draft policy is largely retained from PPS 3 on the advice of DfI Roads and as it accords with the SPPS ensuring “accessibility for all, with the needs of people with disabilities and others whose mobility is impaired given particular consideration” (para 6.297). The Council is committed to improving opportunities for mobility of those in greatest need, which in turn benefits everyone in society.

### **Access to Public Roads and Protected Routes**

- 8.4 The dPS contains draft policies to control the number and standard of accesses onto public roads and Protected Routes. These policies are largely retained as in extant policy in PPS 3 on advice from DfI Roads due to their technical nature and the need to ensure road safety and traffic flows.

### **Protection for New Transport Schemes**

- 8.5 The draft policy is included to provide protection for new transport schemes or planned improvements to the transport network currently identified or designated for protection in the LPP or forthcoming Local Transport Plan, from development likely to jeopardise its implementation. Discussion at SA led to the expansion of the definition of transport schemes to also include improvements to active travel networks. The approach is in line with that of the POP and takes account of the SPPS.

## Disused Transport Routes

- 8.6 In line with the SPPS, the dPS contains a policy to safeguard against the loss of a disused transport route which has potential for future use for transport, active travel, recreation, nature conservation or tourism related purposes. Former transport routes are a valuable resource and their loss to alternative land uses than those stated above will be resisted.

## Policies relating to Parking

- 8.7 The dPS contains a number of operational policies for parking, servicing and parking design alongside policy for car parks. This accords with the regional strategic direction set out in the SPPS and advice from DfI Roads in relation to extant policy in PPS 3. Reference is incorporated to areas of parking restraint which was a preferred option at POP stage. The policy has been amended post SA to generalise language around parking to encompass car, coach and cycle parking which is considered more sustainable than car parking alone.

## 9.0 SOUNDNESS

- 9.1 The LDP has been prepared to meet the tests of soundness as set out in the DfI Development Plan Practice Note 6: Soundness (Version 2, May 2017). The draft Plan Strategy insofar as it relates to transportation subject policies and other relevant policies in the document are regarded as sound, as it is considered to have met the various tests of soundness as summarised below:

**Table 4: Consideration of Soundness**

Procedural Tests	
<b>P2</b>	The transportation policies have evolved from the POP, POP consultation Report and Consultee, Development Management and Councillor Engagement as described in earlier sections of this document.
<b>P3</b>	The transportation policies have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal. Further details are included in the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

## Consistency Tests

<b>C1</b>	The transportation policies have taken account of the RDS in particular RG2, RG9, SFG4 and SFG14.
<b>C2</b>	The transportation policies have taken account of our Community Plan, particularly outcomes 1 and 5.
<b>C3</b>	The transportation policies have taken account of existing planning policies as contained within the SPPS, in particular paragraphs 6.293-6.305.
<b>C4</b>	The transportation policies have taken account of the existing development plans within Ards and North Down, ongoing Council initiatives and the neighbouring council context.

## Coherence and Effectiveness Tests

<b>CE1</b>	The transportation policies have taken account of the emerging LDPs of our three neighbouring Councils, and it is not considered to be in conflict with them.
<b>CE2</b>	The transportation policies are founded on a robust evidence base which includes the baseline information assembled in the Transportation Position Paper, the POP and responses to it and subsequent consultation with consultees, including DfI.
<b>CE3</b>	As per the monitoring framework, Council will monitor the total number of planning approvals demonstrating how the promotion of active travel and sustainable transport has been maximised.
<b>CE4</b>	Transportation policies will be reviewed at Plan Review stage. Where possible, the need for flexibility has been considered in the strategic approach and draft policies. Local Policies Plan will afford opportunity to align the Eastern Transport Plan proposals with zonings and designations and allows for the introduction of transportation related key site requirements.